



From Travel Business Analyst

# People-in-Travel

Tracking Travel's Leaders

## Barry's back

Barry Sternlicht, who runs Starwood Capital – a separate and unconnected company from Starwood Hotels, which he created earlier – is back where he likes to be. The centre of attraction.

In October he launched the '1' hotel brand, which he plans to be a group of environmentally-sustainable luxury hotels.

He is taking a personal line:

"I have grown acutely aware of the personal responsibility we each have to help preserve and protect our planet, which can only happen through the accumulation of small efforts by millions of individuals. It is the perfect time for '1'...We cannot afford to ignore the growing consumption of our natural resources and the inability to sustain our enterprises," he says.

"While some hotel brands pay lip service to the environment by asking guests to reuse towels, and adding plants to a lobby, '1' is not using eco-friendly jargon simply as a marketing tool. Our intention with '1' is to build hotels and residences that are truly green and minimise their impact on their environment.

"Guests...will not necessarily be conscious of all of the green aspects at '1'...The green theme will only be noticeable to the extent that it will help create a healthy and invigorating environment."

In 2005, Sternlicht also bought control of a group with 800 hotels in Europe, mainly at the budget level. But he has created a top-brand out of the about-15 upper-level hotels under the name of one of them, Crillon. However, development of this brand has been slow.

## Briefs

• **Tony Potter**, who was CEO of Millennium & Copthorne Hotels, has become CEO of CHI, based in Malta. CHI is a joint-venture between Malta-based Corinthia Hotels and US-based Wyndham Hotels – the new name for

what was the Cendant Group.

CHI will manage hotels. About seven Corinthia hotels will keep that name, and others will take one of just two Wyndham brands – Wyndham itself or Ramada Plaza – but details are not yet known.

• **Larry Kellner**, head of Continental Airlines:

"We have customised our services through technology, so that we can treat all fliers as if they were frequent fliers. It's all in the execution, so even if most competitors have the same tools as we do, the differentiation is their use".

• Last month, **Gary Rogliano**, who was the first CEO of US-based Maxjet, left the company. This came just after the airline started its twice-weekly flights Las Vegas-London Stansted.

Given that this route seems an odd choice for a business-class-only airline, is that the reason he has left? Maxjet said only that he left "to pursue other opportunities".

William Stockbridge, previously chairman of the airline, has taken over from Rogliano, and Rick Sharp, who was a member of the board, is to become chairman.

• Berlin's splendid **Adlon** hotel, part of the Kempinski group, is becoming better-known for its people connections – but not necessarily the right ones.

Tourists outside the hotel – a few steps from the city's Brandenburg Gate – are directed to the balcony over which Michael Jackson dangled his child. And now Thomas Klippstein, who was its general manager, has left after it was found he worked (well) for East Germany's secret police, the Stasi.

That was when he worked at the Neptun hotel on Germany's Baltic coast. After the two Germanies reunited, he worked with Kempinski – in Bangkok, Istanbul, and St Peters-

burg before Berlin.

We would expect him to be 'rehabilitated', possibly with Kempinski, but not in Germany.

• **Jean-Cyril Spinetta**, head of Air France, has long said that never-but-never would he go the low-fare airline route. Never say never.

He now plans to create a company – part-charter part-LFA – based on Transavia, a subsidiary of Air France's KLM subsidiary.

We think JCS was wrong not to face the LFA competition. And now that he is wrong again, because hybrid airlines do not work. Or rather they do not make money, but this may not be the main aim for Spinetta.

He was not the man who made the announcement about Transavia. Does this mean he does not agree with the plan, or that when it goes wrong he might be able to claim it was not his idea?

The new France-based airline, also called Transavia like its Netherlands-based operation, is to be 60% owned by Air France and 40% by Transavia (which is a subsidiary of KLM). Routes will be from Paris Orly to Morocco, Spain, and Tunisia at least, although not all details have been announced. It will have four B737-800s and should start operating next June.

Presumably JCS will have ensured that Transavia does not have the same difficulty getting airport slots that other new airlines into Paris have experienced.

• Virgin's **Sir Richard Branson** says he has never closed a company. We wait to hear how he will explain the fact that Virgin Express has been absorbed into Brussels Airlines.

• Swiss-born **Kurt Ritter**, who has been with the Rezidor group and its earlier companies for 30 years, has now separated the company from SAS. It is now quoted on the stock-market.

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